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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

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HOLDING THE LINE ON FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT.....The President has made clear his determination to hold the line on Federal employment and, in fact, to reduce this level wherever possible. It is apparent that employment levels will be a critical consideration in decisions on the FY 1980-1982 budget which will be made this summer and fall.

To accomplish this purpose, the Secretary has directed the Assistant Secretaries to work with their agencies to develop a list of actions to reduce Federal employment and to present this list to the Program and Budget Review Board at the agency budget hearings this summer. These actions should cover items where employment can be reduced by reorganization, consolidation or other management improvements, elimination of programs or other activities, or relying upon non-Federal public agencies or the private sector to perform functions or tasks that would otherwise be performed by Federal employees.

The Secretary has instructed that legal constraints or operational difficulties should not be used as reasons for excluding items. In addition, these actions are to focus on total employment needs including temporary as well as permanent staff.

NEW DIRECTOR OF SEA.....Dr. Anson R. Bertrand, Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, has been named Director of Science and Education. Dr. Bertrand will start his new duties on July 10.

Dr. Bertrand was selected from a list of more than 130 nominees and 40 applicants. Secretary Bergland was helped in the selection process by a panel including distinguished university officials and the Assistant Secretary for Conservation, Research and Education.

Dr. Bertrand, born in 1923 in Gatesville, Texas, studied Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M and received M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agronomy at Purdue. In addition to his work at Texas Tech, Dr. Bertrand served as Chairman of the Agronomy Division, College of Agriculture, University of Georgia, and has also worked with SCS and ARS. Since 1976, he has been a member of the State Department Board of International Food and Agricultural Development.

FLEXITIME.....The number of USDA agencies and staff offices on flexitime has increased to seven with the addition of AMS and FGIS on July 1. On July 17, one more agency, SCS, will implement flexitime bringing the number to Washington metropolitan area employees covered by flexitime up to 4500; 40% of the total.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINORITY FARM OPERATORS.....Four USDA agencies; FS, ESCS, FCIC and OEO, have obtained unpublished data from the 1974 Census of Agriculture showing selected characteristics of minority farm operators by State and county. This information will be helpful to agencies whose programs are directed toward farm operators and need to know more about minorities in their target population. (Contact: Percy Luney, OEO, ext. 74563)

EQUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITY.....The Equal Credit Opportunity Act prohibits discrimination in any aspect of a credit transaction because of sex, marital status, race, national origin, religion or age. Brochures explaining rights of individuals under the Act have been ordered by OEO and will be distributed to agencies this month for redistribution to employees and program beneficiaries. These brochures will be available in Spanish and English. (Contact: Bill Payne, OEO, ext. 74806)

MINORITY AND WOMEN AGRICULTURAL GRADUATES.....OEO has obtained data from HEW showing, by institution, minority and women graduates in the agriculture and natural resource field in 1976. Information on women graduates in 17 discipline specialties in this field is also available. These data will help agency EEO and personnel staffs identify institutions producing minority and women graduates in fields meeting agency recruitment needs. (Contact: Fred Hazelwood, OEO, ext. 74564)

AGE DISCRIMINATION.....The Department has adopted a final rule prohibiting age discrimination in direct assistance programs and activities. This rule, 7 CFR 15, Subpart B, will be published this month, in the Federal Register. (Contact: Bill Payne, OEO, ext. 74806)

USDA CASH MANAGEMENT REVIEW.....The USDA-White House Cash Management Review Task Force has completed its review of the cash management activities with selected agencies in the Department. The final report, if accepted as currently drafted, will show that the Department is already doing a fairly good job in terms of how it handles and manages its cash deposits and receipts. There will be some recommendations for additional improvements and we plan to distribute summaries of the reports after the final report has been approved and sent to the White House. The team leader (from outside the Department) was highly complimentary of Departmental agencies and individuals who participated in the review for their spirit of cooperation in completing the review. (Contact: Don Manns, O&F, ext. 77251)

FISCAL YEAR 1979 APPROPRIATIONS.....The House passed the fiscal year 1979 Appropriation Bill on June 22. The Senate Appropriation Committee has delayed reporting their version of the Bill until after the Independence Day recess. (Contact: B. L. Barham, OBPE, ext. 76176)

GAO AUDIT OF USDA FIELD SERVICE STRUCTURE.....At the request of Senator Bellmon, GAO has initiated a survey and review of USDA's colocation of county offices. GAO is coordinating this review with the Department's Field Service Structure Task Force effort. No date has been given for completion of the GAO review. (Contact: Frank Di Galleonardo, Management Staff, ext. 78482)